Spring 2016 First Year Seminar Course Descriptions  
(rev. 11/11/15)

All students must complete a first year seminar in the fall or spring of their first year. In no instance will the cap for a FY Seminar exceed 20 students.

Courses highlighted in red are restricted to students enrolled in special programs (e.g., Honors, Service Learning).

ASC 150 (Actuarial Science) Forecasting the Future- the Mathematics of Risk  
Dr. Robert DeLiberato
Actuaries identify, evaluate, and quantify risk. This first year seminar course will examine techniques used by actuaries to forecast the future. The course will be interactive and will make extensive use of simulations based in Excel. Students will learn to make predictions based on past patterns, ranging from sports statistics to bond prices and insurance premiums. There will be classroom debates and group discussions on the challenges actuaries face in reconciling mathematical and social equity. Sample topics will include debating whether younger drivers should pay more for car insurance, discussing if affordable health insurance is a right, and examining the fairness and future of the social security system. Risk management professionals and actuaries will be featured as guest speakers during the semester. Basic Excel spreadsheet skills will be demonstrated and taught.

ENG 150 Apocalyptic Literature & Film  
Dr. Paul Patterson
The idea of the apocalypse has haunted humanity since the beginning of time. Nearly every culture has an apocalypse myth and in recent years our own culture has witnessed a heightened interest in the “end of the world.” From Christian rapture narratives to Mayan calendars, apocalypticism is central to popular culture. Not surprisingly, many of the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives in popular culture feature dystopian worlds. In this course we will explore dystopian, apocalyptic, and post-apocalyptic films and literary texts in an effort to examine in what way these stories shape and influence our own moment in history.

ENG 150 A. I. in Fiction, Fact, Film  
Dr. Jo Alyson Parker
As Daniel Dennett queries, “If a cleverly designed robot could (seem to) tell us of its inner life (could utter all the appropriate noises in the appropriate contexts), would it be right to admit it to the charmed circle?”—that is, as assuming it has what we call consciousness. In the realm of speculative fiction, writers and filmmakers have explored the nature of consciousness by focusing on such “cleverly designed robots” As we have entered the computer age, they have also gone beyond the cleverly designed robots, speculating about the nature of computer intelligence. In this course, we will examine fictional narratives and films that foreground artificial intelligence in order to explore the nature of consciousness. Concurrently, we will read philosophical and scientific texts that discuss the issues of consciousness and artificial intelligence.  
Possible Films: *Blade Runner; "The Measure of a Man" (Star Trek: TNG); "The Devil's Hand* (Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles); *Ghost in the Shell; Her; Ex Machina*; selected excerpts

FMK 150 (Food Marketing) Exploring History, Culture & Future: Eating
George Latella
This course covers the importance of food to the development of civilization. The first half of the course will be devoted to the history of food and its relationship to culture, from the prehistoric hunter-gatherers to the modern day fascination with all things culinary. The second half of the course will be devoted to understanding the modern food system within the developed world with particular emphasis on the thorny issues that are currently being debated: organics, buy local, genetic modification, sustainability, obesity, hunger and other topics of interest as they come up.

FMK 150 (Food Marketing) Food and Sustainability
Sara Williamson
This first year seminar explores the topic of sustainability as it relates to the food industry. Students will learn to conceptualize food sustainability and become familiar with sustainability issues from food production to consumption. Not only will the course address commonly known practices and product attributes which the consumer perceives as sustainable (e.g., organic, local, humane), but will also reveal applied sustainability issues along the food value chain (e.g., food policy, hunger, waste, corporate sustainability initiatives, globalization).

HIS 150 (History) Reacting to the Past
Dr. Jeffrey Hyson
Using an innovative and exciting role-playing method, students in this seminar will “become” political, intellectual, and religious leaders in three famous gatherings held at critical moments in history: the Athenian assembly in 403 B.C., the Grand Secretariat of Ming China in 1587, and the French National Assembly in 1791. Acting in the roles of these historical figures, students will discuss some of the central questions in political and social thought: Who should hold power in government, and why? What are the respective rights and responsibilities of "citizens," "subjects," and "rulers"? How do we balance the needs of individuals with the demands of the broader community? By reading primary and secondary sources, writing persuasive arguments, and conducting intensive “in-character” debates, students will develop a more active, engaged, and empathetic understanding of both historic events and historical practice.

HON 150 (Honors) Epic Tradition in Literature
Dr. Peter Norberg
*Restricted to Honors students*

This course will focus on the careful textual study of major works from the ancient, medieval and early modern periods that have had a lasting influence on how we think about personal freedom, ethical obligation, and the force of law, both human and divine. Each author considered will be presented within a rich historical context and significant emphasis will be placed on Ancient and Medieval writers, in order to provide students a foundational introduction to the Western intellectual tradition that is taken up in subsequent team-taught Honors seminars (*Reason, Reaction, Revolution and Modern Mosaic*). The Homeric epics, Plato's *Dialogues*, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *The Confessions of Augustine*, *Dante’s Divine Comedy*—such works established the conceptual framework in which questions of justice, personal freedom, and moral obligation continue to be debated today. The directed discussions and written assignments for this
course are designed to draw out the presuppositions and arguments of such texts and to have students debate how such matters can inform a critical understanding of contemporary culture.

**IBU 150 (International Business) Cultural Diversity and International Business**  
**Dr. Joao Neiva de Figueiredo**  
This course is an introduction to international business and its many dimensions through the lens of cultural diversity. The course develops the understanding that cultural diversity is a crucial component of sustained and productive cross-border interactions in general and international business in particular. It discusses the power of diversity whereby the whole can be made greater than the sum of the parts. Through in-class exercises and out-of-class assignments, the course leads students to reflect that their framework for looking at the world around them, i.e., their worldview, may be very different from that of other cultures. A necessary condition for engaging in international business is to be aware of cultural differences and be able to adapt to environments that are different from those one is used to. This course develops in students not only the knowledge to better understand the reasons behind these cultural differences, but also the ability to more easily and effectively adapt to them. The main objective of the course is to provide students with a broad context enabling them to develop the capacity for critical thinking as well as the skills necessary to understand what success means in today's culturally diverse global business environment. It is not enough to be economically successful. In fact, being economically successful is indeed undesirable in the absence of social responsibility and concern for the health of the planet.

**IHS 150 (Interdisciplinary Health Services) Global Health Care**  
**Godysn Orji**  
This is a first year seminar course designed to introduce non-major students to several major themes of American health care and to a comparison of this country's health care system in relation to the health care systems of other countries. These macro health care issues include the social, political, and cultural foundations for health care, the economics of health care delivery, the ethical frameworks countries use to establish their interpretation of acceptable performance and behavior, the process by which the United States and other countries develop and implement their health policies, and what are now global trends for health care regardless of historical past, political system, or social cultures. The course requires significant analysis and critical review, application of data mining and literature reviews to study the unique aspects of the American health care system and how this system compares to those of other countries.

**LEO 150 (Leadership, Ethics & Organizational Sustainability) Serious Comedy & Social Justice**  
**Dr. C. Ken Weidner**  
Comedy has long been a vehicle by which performers and audiences can engage uncomfortable truths and issues of social injustice, including corporate social irresponsibility. Comedy is increasingly important to individuals' identity; recent research has shown that "[m]ore than music, more than sports, more than 'personal style,' comedy has become essential to how young men view themselves and others" (Carter, 2012: B1). Comedy (including satire and parody) is also a growing business, as evidenced by the popularity of Comedy Central, movies, television programs, YouTube, and other platforms. In this course, we will explore important issues of social justice (e.g., globalization, racism, gender equity, poverty) as presented in comedy across a variety of sources both contemporary (e.g., South Park, The Daily Show, The Colbert Report, The Simpsons) and classic (e.g., All in the Family, The Smothers Brothers, M*A*S*H).
MGT 150 (Management) Work is Our Fire
Dr. Lisa Nelson
Is our work who we are? Drawing from the social sciences, this seminar encourages students to approach work as the essence of being—our “fire”—and working as a journey of experience and expression of dignity and not solely as a burden or means to make a living. Students will isolate and interrogate social and economic class stereotypes, misconceptions, and attitudes concerning a variety of jobs and professions as well as possible origins for these perceptions. The concept of occupational identity is introduced to illustrate how work can consume us (positively and negatively), how we can assume our working role as part of our understanding of “self,” and how we see others based on our attitudes about their occupational roles. Discussions will tackle definitions of success, legacy, respectability, prestige, materialism, workaholism, stress, and professionalism and how our definitions are influenced by personal and cultural values.

MHC 150 (Managing Human Capital) Gender in the Workplace
Dr. Eric Patton
This course will approach workplace issues involving gender from both a psychological and management perspective. Specific issues discussed will include gender and leadership, occupational segregation of the workforce by gender, the effects of gender on manager-subordinate relationships, gender and sexual harassment in the workplace, pay equity, and family friendly workplace policies. Wherever appropriate, comparisons to other countries and cultures will be made.

MKT 150 (Marketing) People, Planet and Profit
Dr. Diane Phillips
The purpose of this course will be to help students understand the responsibility that they have in helping to live a more sustainable lifestyle, persuading others to live a sustainable lifestyle, and acting as key influencers in helping to persuade businesses and other organizations in becoming more sustainable. As the title of the class indicates, students will be able to see how individuals, the environment, and organizations can exist in harmony with one another. Indeed, as global citizens of the 21st Century, we have a moral imperative to do so.

MTF 150 American Roots: Folk Music Identity
Dr. Rachel Hall
This course explores the variety of music that has been identified as “American folk music.” Questions for investigation include: What music is perceived and promoted as “authentically” American? Is the music of some ethnic or regional groups or economic classes privileged above others? How have the agendas of academic folklorists, record company executives, music promoters, and political activists shaped public perception of American folk music? How have these agendas determined what music is performed and recorded? Is commercialism of folk music necessarily a bad thing? In addition to examining primary and secondary sources, students will learn about this music in three ways. First, they will gain an appreciation of folk music repertoire through practical experience, including informal performance, group music making, and attendance at cultural events in the Philadelphia area. Second, each student will complete a research project about roots music and identity in an American regional or ethnic community. Third, the class will document roots music communities in Philadelphia through interviews with local musicians. The course is not a historical survey of American music; rather, we use the living tradition of American roots music as a reference point for a discussion of the construction of a distinctly American musical identity and the problems inherent in such a construction.
PMK 150 Global Healthcare: A Societal and Business Perspective
Dr. William Trombetta and Marie Strasser
President Obama and Congress passed a milestone healthcare law that took effect in March 2010. We will be analyzing among other issues:
- Who "wins" and who "loses"?
- What will change in the delivery of healthcare, if anything?
- What can stop the ever increasing cost of healthcare?
- Healthcare systems throughout the world: aka, is it better to get sick in France or in the US?
- What is "Managed Care"; Who are these guys who operate in a nether world beneath the radar but absolutely control what doctors we can see, what hospitals we can go to, and what drugs we can take

PMK 150 Smart Healthcare Consumer
Dr. Thanigavelan Jambulingam
Becoming a smart healthcare consumer enables understanding of what having healthcare benefits means from the patient’s perspective as well as from the way healthcare delivery works in the U.S. It will also provide insights about healthcare delivery from the perspectives of all stakeholders, who either directly provide care to patients, such as doctors, nurses or hospitals, or indirectly participate in healthcare delivery, such as those who influence, regulate, adjudicate and/or pay for it. Class time will be dedicated to enhancing knowledge using research techniques from the business reference librarian to learn about medical innovation and the influence for-profit medicine has on it as well as time-tested basics of effectively treating patients. Learning will be enhanced by weekly service commitments at local not-for-profit healthcare delivery organizations in one section.

POL 150 (Political Science) Politics of Inequality and Diversity in America
Instructor TBA
Since its founding, America has prided itself on the principle of equality in the political arena. Unlike European communities, the United States did not inherit a system of economic class distinctions. Nonetheless, there have always been empirical inconsistencies between the rhetoric of equality and the actual lived experience of democracy in America. While it is true that the U.S. has "democratized" many aspects of its political system, it is also the case that America has become increasingly unequal in terms of social, political, and economic indicators over the past three decades. Inequality in wealth distribution inherently structures and impacts other cleavages within the U.S. polity such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality, which may undermine a truly informed and participatory democratic system. This course will analyze patterns of diversity, inequality, and uniformity across the U.S. in terms of race/ethnicity, class, gender, and/or sexuality as well as the corresponding policies, interest groups, and representatives that attend to these issues. Specifically, we will discuss how these patterns affect democratic governance in the U.S. – in other words, whose voices are reflected in the political world and where? The course's substantive focus will critically examine the relationship between the empirical evidence of diversity/inequality and the three major aspects of the political system: voice, governance, and policy. We will study the issue of diversity and inequality from a variety of perspectives: political theory, political participation, social movements, public opinion, interest groups and organizations, the media, elected officials, public policy, and governing institutions.

POL 150 (Political Science) Women, Girls and Global Politics
Dr. Lisa Baglione
Although women and girls comprise roughly half the earth’s population, traditional analyses of world politics have ignored their roles in politics and the effects of international and national politics on females. This course seeks to remedy this absence by focusing on pressing contemporary issues, including political empowerment and democratization, post-conflict peace building, economic opportunities (and their absence), and gender-based violence. Not for major credit. This is a Gender Studies course.

**PSY 150 (Psychology) Gender Matters**  
**Dr. Catherine Murray**  
This course provides an overview of research and theories on the biological, psychological, and social aspects of gender. Areas of similarities as well as differences between men and women will be discussed. Significant attention will be given to the impact gender has on the everyday lives of women and men in contemporary American society today.

**RMI 150 Natural Disasters & Coastal Recovery**  
**Dr. Steven Miller**  
The goal of this course is to empower students to use primary and secondary sources to investigate community recovery from natural disasters. The research will highlight the economics and social impact of insurance. Specifically, students will compare and contrast community recovery from different types of natural disasters while evaluating the successes and/or struggles of insurance products in aiding community recovery from natural disasters.

**SOC 150 Sociological Imagination**  
**Dr. Robert Moore**

The main purpose of the First Year Seminar is to provide a setting and materials that will allow students to think sociologically, or to develop the Sociological Imagination. Sociologist C. Wright Mills said that to have the sociological imagination is to understand the intersection of history and biography. In other words, how is one’s individual biography shaped by the social institutions in place at any given moment in history?

This is not as easy as it may sound. Most students who are born and raised in the United States have been trained (socialized) to think of the world in individual terms. This type of training often results in what is known as psychological reductionism, or the tendency to reduce all problems to psychological ones. The study of social issues requires a substantial shift in perspective and a willingness to look at the world in a different way. This course can provide the tools necessary for such a perspective, but only you, the student, can decide whether you are willing to engage such a perspective.

This course will familiarize the student with the rich range of topics, theoretical perspectives, and methods found in the discipline of sociology, and to provide an opportunity for in-depth study through a combination of readings, film, in-class exercises, and written assignments. Another objective is to provide a learning context where the student can make connections between the discipline of sociology and his/her life and the lives of others. Students are encouraged to explore the social structural and cultural elements that shape their lives.
THE 150 Exploring the New Testament
Dr. Paul Aspan

The first year seminar class, Exploring the New Testament, is designed to introduce students to the foundational documents of Christianity with an engaging mix of reading, discussion, lecture, research, and writing. The goal of the course is to develop students as close and critical readers of the New Testament texts. As a “prequel”, we will consider important background themes from the Hebrew Scriptures, Second Temple apocalypticism, and the political and socioeconomic life of the first century Roman Empire. Then, in that context, we’ll go to the New Testament itself to examine the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and its implications as understood by his followers, then and now. Ancillary topics will include the role of hermeneutics and New Testament canon formation. Throughout, we will address historical and critical considerations.

Our primary text will be the New Testament, with supporting readings from other ancient and modern sources. I expect to also include one or two contemporary films, and possibly, a trip to the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

THE 150 Ignatius & the City: Jesuit Urban Missiology
Rev. Daniel Joyce, S. J.

Five centuries ago Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), was using social context as an necessary component of theological reasoning. To give early Jesuits the proper context within which to maintain their spirituality and develop their theology, Ignatius directed them to live with the poor of the cities of Europe, debate theology at the highest levels of society, hear confessions, preach in the streets, and tend the sick and under-represented in the most wretched urban areas. Out of this experience developed a strategy for an new urbanism and the elements of a new missiology.

This course reviews the theology and spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola and how his early followers in the Society of Jesus established a particular missiology. It includes a thorough study of the network of ministries created by the first generation of Jesuits in Rome with particular emphasis on: the urban context, the use of the arts and architecture, ministry to the economically under-represented. An examination of how that missiology has been used in and around the City of Philadelphia in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries will be part of the course. An analysis of how a Jesuit urban strategy was or was not maintained by later Jesuits will be included.